

does not mean that Whiteville's economic dependence on agricul-
ture will lessen. Rather, because of the productivity of the
land in the Whiteville area, it is very probable that agriculture
will continue to represent an important part of Whiteville's eco-
nomy, but with a general shifting away from tobacco toward a more
diversified form of agriculture.

Retail Business:

An analysis of retail business has been omitted since this
segment of the economy will be explored in detail in the central
business district study which should be completed during the
winter of 1963.

Concluding Remarks on the Economy:

Whiteville's economy is in a critical period of transition,
shifting away from an agricultural-commercial base to an agricul-
tural-industrial-commercial base. Agricultural dollars are cer-
tainly important to the local economy, but with a continued de-
crease in the number of farm families, and an increase in employ-
ment opportunities in industry, an increasing number of local
dollars are coming from industrial payrolls rather than from the
sale of agricultural products.

It is very probable that the community is enjoying a high
level of prosperity only because of the recent opening and ex-
pansion of the two local textile plants. The maximum economic
benefits to Whiteville from these two industries are going to be
realized in the very near future, if not already, by a general
leveling off of retail sales and other economic related activ-
ities. To avoid or curtail this leveling off, new job opportu-
nities will need to be provided; and equally important, the
local merchants will need to intensify their promotional activ-
ity to retain their present customers and to attract the poten-
tial customers that live in the rural areas around Whiteville
that would currently just as soon drive to Lumberton or Wilmington
to shop as to come to Whiteville.